

## "My Poem" and "Revolutionary Dreams" by [Nikki Giovanni](#)



Read about Nikki Giovanni on the Poetry Foundation link at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/nikki-giovanni>, and click on the AHWIR Nikki Giovanni page at <http://www.shepherd.edu/ahwir> to explore the links and the critical essay on her work. Pay particular attention to her interest in the **Black Power** Movement of the 1970s. Giovanni was a published poet by age 22 and became part of the **Black Arts Movement** in America. One of her early poems, "My Poem," was published in 1968 (*Black Judgement*, 1968). Read the poem below and determine whether or not there still exists in America today the need for what Giovanni calls "The Revolution." Read also her poem "Revolutionary Dreams (Re-creation, 1970)"; how does Giovanni re-interpret the concept of "revolution" in this poem?

### "My Poem"

I am 25 years old, black female poet "My Poem,"  
asking nigger can you kill  
if they kill me it won't stop the revolution.

I have been robbed it looked like  
they knew that I was to be hit  
they took my TV my two rings  
my piece of African print and my two guns  
if they take my life it won't stop the revolution.

My phone is tapped my mail is opened  
they've caused me to turn on all my friends  
and all of my new lovers if I hate all black people  
and all Negroes it won't stop the revolution.

I'm afraid to tell my roommate where I'm going  
and scared to tell people if I'm coming  
if I sit here for the rest of my life  
it won't stop the revolution.

If I never write another poem or short story  
if I flunk out of grad school if my car is reclaimed  
and my record player won't play  
and if I never see a peaceful day or do a meaningful black thing  
it won't stop the revolution...

### "Revolutionary Dreams"

i used to dream militant  
dreams of taking  
over American to show  
these white folks how it should be  
done  
i used to dream radical dreams  
of blowing everyone away with my perceptive powers  
of correct analysis  
i even used to think i'd be the one  
to stop the riot and negotiate the peace  
then i awoke and dug  
that if i dreamed natural  
dreams of being a natural  
woman doing what a woman

does when she's natural  
i would have a revolution